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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 23 January 2014 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you of the continuing turmoil and deterioration of the situation in the Occupied State of Palestine due to illegal and provocative policies that continue to be pursued by Israel, the occupying Power. While serious peace efforts are being undertaken both regionally and internationally to achieve peace and to salvage the two-State solution, Israel instead continues to choose aggression and colonization. In fact, since the resumption of the peace talks, not a single day has passed in which the occupying Power has ceased its oppressive and destructive measures threatening to derail the peace talks and threatening to create an environment for violence to erupt and spiral out of control.

The latest spate of Israeli crimes took place yesterday, Wednesday, 22 January, in the Gaza Strip, an integral part of the State of Palestine, which remains under an oppressive, unlawful blockade. For the second time in a week, Israeli occupying forces launched military strikes against the Gaza Strip, firing a missile at a car carrying Ahmed Zaanin, 21 years old, and Mahmoud Zaanin, 23 years old, killing them both. We continue to condemn this illegal practice of extrajudicial executions repeatedly perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, and call for the international community to take measures to ensure accountability for such grave violations of international law and human rights law.

In addition to the killing of Palestinian civilians, Israel continues with its illegal, provocative measures that continue to aggravate tensions. While all these issues, in particular the issue of continued settlement activities, were highlighted during the State of Palestine's intervention at the Security Council on 20 January 2014, in which more than 40 Member States who addressed the Council reiterated the illegality of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obstacle they pose to peace, I remain compelled to draw the

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international community's attention to several actions taken by the occupying Power over the past days.

Yesterday, Wednesday, 22 January, Israel, the occupying Power, moved forward with its plans for another 261 new units in two settlements located deep in the West Bank. This includes 256 units in the so-called settlement of "Nofei Prat", between Jerusalem and Jericho, which, according to Peace Now, dramatically changes the settlement, expanding its size and population significantly, in fact tripling its size. Another five settlement units in the massive settlement of "Ariel" in the north were also included in that announcement. Also this week, the occupying Power's so-called Jerusalem municipality announced its plans to build a new settlement "neighbourhood" south of the City, which would include 1,700 settlement units. Furthermore, a further 381 new settlement units were approved to be built in the so-called settlement of "Givat Zeev" north of Jerusalem.

Along with the innumerable violations to Palestinian rights as a result of illegal settlements, racist and fanatic Israeli settlers continue to wreak havoc and destruction on Palestinian properties and land throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In the recent period, extremist settlers have continued to vandalize homes and to destroy olive groves and other farmlands. The most recent attacks occurred yesterday, when Israeli settlers uprooted over 600 recently planted olive and almond saplings in the village of Sinjil, north of Ramallah in the West Bank. It should be noted that the saplings were planted by the International Committee of the Red Cross to support Palestinian farmers and would have benefited more than 70 families.

The occupying Power is also pushing ahead with excavation plans for a so-called second "visitors' centre" at the entrance to Wadi Hilweh in Silwan, a densely populated neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Such excavations by the occupying Power at the entrance to Wadi Hilweh are destroying deep-rooted Islamic antiquities from the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate eras. The Al-Aqsa Foundation for Endowment and Heritage highlighted in a statement that previous excavations adjacent to the area had demolished an Islamic cemetery from the Abbasid era. We condemn and reject all Israeli measures and attempts to illegally alter the character, historic and religious identity and legal status of these historical sites and demand a halt to any and all such measures throughout Occupied East Jerusalem.

All of these illegal Israeli policies and practices are fuelling tensions on the ground, inciting violence and provoking deeper mistrust. The negative impact of such Israeli breaches on the situation on the ground is vast and is deepening pessimism with respect to the potential for the success of the current peace negotiations and the ultimate viability of the two-State solution. A clear demand must be made to Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its illegal actions and commit to the path of peace. The international community, foremost the Security Council, has clear responsibilities in this regard and must no longer tolerate the occupying Power's empty pretexts, deception and blatant contempt for international law. The international community must act collectively to hold Israel accountable for its violations and crimes and salvage the prospects for the realization of peace and justice in 2014.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 482 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters,

dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 January 2014 (A/ES-10/612-S/2014/16) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations